

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20423

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**AB-33 (Sub-No. 157X)**

**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY—ABANDONMENT EXEMPTION—IN  
MONTEREY COUNTY, CA**

**BACKGROUND**

Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 to abandon approximately 13.1-miles of railroad (the Seaside Industrial Lead) extending from milepost 110.2 near Castroville, CA, to the end of the line at milepost 123.3 near Seaside, CA, in Monterey County, CA. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 95012 and 93955. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track,<sup>1</sup> ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

**CONTACTS AND PROCEDURES**

The railroad has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post-abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have consulted with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Historic Preservation Officer, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and National Geodetic Survey.

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<sup>1</sup>Defined as removal of track and ties

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

UP states that there are no shippers on the line; and no commodities have moved over the line for over two years. UP believes that the line could be sold for public use as a commuter line. No effects on regional or local transportation systems and patterns are anticipated. All operations and maintenance of this line have ceased. Abandonment would result in removal of the rail and cross-ties.

No diversion of traffic from rail to truck transportation would occur as a result of the proposed abandonment, and, therefore, no significant impact on air quality would occur. Temporary increases in noise levels during salvage may occur, but should not have a significant impact on the area surrounding the proposed abandonment.. The proposed abandonment is not anticipated to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or areas designated as critical habitat.

The line passes through a designated coastal zone. The California Coastal Commission (CCC) advises that significantly high levels of lead and other contaminants have been discovered by the U.S. Army at Fort Ord, which the rail line runs through. Additionally, the U.S. Coast Guard conducted an investigation in the area of the proposed abandonment and discovered that lead from the rail line was leaching into adjacent Monterey Harbor and causing adverse impacts to marine life. Given these historic problems, the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) recommends that UP consult with the CCC: 1) to advise CCC of any physical activities that are being proposed in conjunction with the proposed abandonment and 2) to provide CCC additional information to enable CCC to determine the need for federal consistency review.

The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) advises that in the event the rail line is abandoned, UP should file a Form G with the PUC to close all rail crossings on the line and remove the track and railroad warning devices at the crossings. SEA recommends that UP consult with the PUC prior to commencing any salvage activities.

The Army Corps of Engineers (CORPS) advises that based on available information it is unable to determine if additional review is required by the CORPS. SEA recommends that UP consult with the CORPS regarding CORPS requirements related to any salvage activities.

## **Cultural and Historic Resources**

The railroad submitted an historic report as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.8(a)]. The railroad served the report on the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.8(c). The SHPO has submitted comments stating that no historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) would be affected by the proposed abandonment. We have reviewed the report and the information provided by the SHPO and concur with the SHPO's comments.

Pursuant to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for implementing the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act at 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1) and 36 CFR 800.8, we have determined that the proposed abandonment will not affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The documentation for this finding, as specified at 36 CFR 800.11(d), consists of the railroad's historic report, all relevant correspondence, and this EA, which have been provided to the SHPO and made available to the public.

## **CONDITIONS**

SEA recommends that the following conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

1. The line passes through a designated coastal zone. The California Coastal Commission (CCC) advises that significantly high levels of lead and other contaminants have been discovered by the U.S. Army at Fort Ord, which the rail line runs through. Additionally, the U.S. Coast Guard conducted an investigation in the area of the proposed abandonment and discovered that lead from the rail line was leaching into adjacent Monterey Harbor and causing impacts to marine life. Given these historic problems, the Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) recommends that UP consult with the CCC : 1) to advise the CCC of any physical activities that are being proposed in conjunction with the proposed abandonment and 2) to provide additional information to enable the CCC to determine the need for federal consistency review.
2. The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) advises that in the event the rail line is abandoned, UP should file a Form G with the PUC to close all rail crossings on the line and remove the track and railroad warning devices at the crossings. SEA recommends that UP consult with the PUC prior to commencing any salvage activities.
3. The Army Corps of Engineers (CORPS) advises that based on available information it is unable to determine if additional review is required by the CORPS. SEA recommends that UP consult with the CORPS regarding CORPS requirements related to any salvage activities.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed abandonment would include denial (and therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In any of these cases, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

## **PUBLIC USE**

Following abandonment and any salvage of the rail line, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

## **TRAILS USE**

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. Nevertheless, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

## **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

The Board's Office of Public Services (OPS) responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact OPS directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, Office of Public Services, Room 848, Washington, DC 20423.

## **COMMENTS**

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, you should send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Phillis Johnson-Ball, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB 33 (Sub No. 157X) all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: 11/28/03.

**Comment due date: 12/15/03**

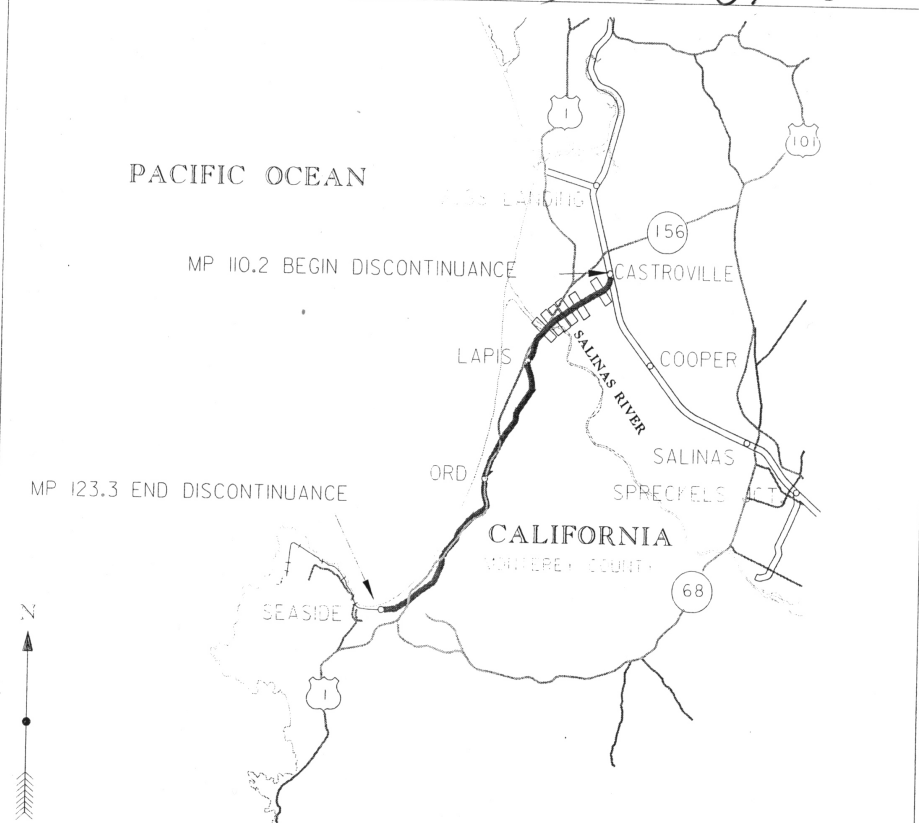
By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary

Attachment

AB-33 (Sub-No. 157X) ID-34195

EXHIBIT A



BRIDGE NO.	BRIDGE TYPE	TOTAL LENGTH	DATE
111.05	TIMBER PILE TREESTLE - OPEN DECK	139.5'	1909
111.93	TIMBER PILE TREESTLE - OPEN DECK	44.3'	1909
112.54	TIMBER PILE TREESTLE - OPEN DECK	119'	1909
112.80	TIMBER PILE TREESTLE - OPEN DECK	224'	1909
113.04	TIMBER PILE TREESTLE - OPEN DECK	89'	1909
113.46	THRU PLATE GIRDER - OPEN DECK	700'	1904

#### SEASIDE INDUSTRIAL LEAD

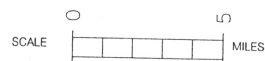
MP 110.2 TO MP 123.3  
SEASIDE INDUSTRIAL LEAD TOTAL OF 13.1 MILES  
IN MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

STATION	MILE POST	AGENCY
CASTROVILLE	110.2	NO
ORD	119.2	NO
SEASIDE	123.3	NO

#### LEGEND

- UPRR TRACKAGE RIGHTS TO BE DISCONTINUED
- OTHER UPRR LINES
- OTHER RAILROADS
- 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES
- PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS
- OTHER ROADS

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD CO.  
SEASIDE INDUSTRIAL LEAD  
INCL. 50+ YEAR OLD STRUCTURES



ABO198 SEASIDE.DGN

SEPTEMBER 16, 2003